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P E A C E

T H E

B E S T P O L I C Y .



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T H E  
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R E F L E C T I O N S  
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C O M M I S S I O N f o r G R A N T I N G P A R D O N S  
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*I N A L E T T E R T O A F R I E N D*  
B Y M A T T . R O B I N S O N M.

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L O N D O N:  
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MDCCLXXVII.

P E A C E

THE

BEST POLICY

REFLECTION

UPON THE

ATTACHMENT OF A FOREIGN WAR

THE

PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN EUROPE

COMMISSIONER OF THE UNITED STATES

IN AMERICA.

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IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND

148

BY MATT. ROBINSON





( 2 )

~~to look into our affairs more than I~~  
~~presume it to be meet, that I should free-~~  
~~ly answer what you so emphatically enquire.~~  
**P E A C E**  
~~I am now going to leave that behind hand-~~  
~~ing the facts mentioned by you I feel no rea-~~  
~~son for any change in my opinion from~~  
**THE**  
**BEST POLICY, &c.**

**S I R,**

**I** HAVE received the favour of your letter, in which you set forth our American victories and advantages; that after a continued series of success on our side news is arrived of the Provincial army being fled backward into the Highlands, of Fort Washington being taken by surrender and Fort Lee without resistance nor can any one say what further accounts may yet come before the conclusion of the campaign: whereupon you ask me what I now think of the contest between Great Britain and her Colonies. I don't know how far

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these distant triumphs will allow us leisure to look into our affairs nearer home ; but I presume it to be meant, that I should freely answer what you so emphatically enquire. I am then sorry to say, that notwithstanding the facts mentioned by you I see no reason for any change in my opinion from what it was at the first outset of these proceedings ; but on the contrary that time is evidently and daily bringing forward the events, which were from the beginning to be expected. Evils before on the anvil only forging and hammering are at present abroad. Fleets and armies were then preparing and sending, dangerous plans were projecting and executing, administration threatened and prudent persons were alarmed ; but a civil war now rages in full force, our provinces are driven into a declaration of independence, ruin is coming upon us as an armed man and I hardly know, whether it is permitted to add, that our ministers move to our destruction, like giants refreshed with wine. The more powerful armaments that we employ and the more mischief

chief



chief we make, the further that we advance or the deeper we engage in this unhappy business; so much the wider will be the breach between us and our colonies, so much the more grievous the wounds given and received on each side and the surer in the end our own undoing; whether this shall happen by the means of defeat or of victory. How are all our boasts, our addresses and exultations on this occasion any wiser; than if a man frantie with rage and having himself in his fury cut and slashed his limbs was to lift up the dagger dropping with his own blood and should cry, have not I performed a brave action?

These things however are become a trite topic, a reader or a writer cannot but be tired with their repetition; although we seem otherwise no more sensible of them, than the man borne upon a bier is of his own knell. I should therefore not have now troubled you on the subject; but that we are on this our ill-fated journey arrived at one further stage, where we have im-

portant reasons at least well to consider in what manner and by which road we will proceed; if we are immoveably resolved not to stay our steps and to return.

A French war was always to be looked for at the season chosen by that nation and if it should be necessary for the continuing afunder us and our colonies; but now it plainly appears in full fight before us. Portugal and Spain have already been at blows in South America: Great Britain and France are arming and preparing: assistance to the Portuguese is certain war with the French and the Spaniards or this event may come upon us of itself; in either of which cases a junction of our colonies against us with those two powers will bid fair to wind up the whole of this fatal catastrophe, that the course of our counsels has for a long time been gradually bringing about. A considerable body of our sailors and the greatest part of the frigates and small vessels of our fleet are at a distance occupied in an employment very different



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been only a sport to us in comparison; but now — *non levia aut ludicra*—it will in this case not be about a few broken heads on the continent or at a distance: our own country will be the scene of action and at stake on the cast. Great Britain is in one respect utterly unlike the rest of Europe; which is almost throughout cut and carved into fortifications; whereas there is from one end to the other of our island not a place, that can for a day or an hour withstand a proper train of battering artillery. Whoever with us is master of the field; is so likewise of every city, every town, every house and habitation of our country. We have no barrier for defence, no forts for delay. All must be at the mercy of a victorious commander; who has only to march and to take possession. Our armies themselves have no walls under the cannon of which on occasion to retreat nor any safety, but in victory. What could preserve the person of our prince or his royal and numerous offspring from captivity or our prodigious and at present opulent Capital from  
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plunder after one or at most two defeats in the field of battle? What Englishman could in such an exigency find where to shelter himself, his family or whatsoever should be most precious and most valuable to him? This sequestered and unmolested island is, as it were a maiden territory: no foreign enemy has on this happy spot (happy if our own governors would not involve us in misfortunes) set his foot by force since the Norman invasion; for Lewis the dauphin was called hither by our barons of that time against king John and rather brought benefit, than otherwise to the Public. This nation has often done much mischief to our neighbours of France at their own homes; but we have hitherto never received any from them in return at ours. We have abroad the reputation of endless riches. Our funds are a circumstance unexampled and unknown in the world before. The foldier or the plunderer may come hither, hungry and eager for his prey; when we shall have only bankruptcy and misery with which to dis-

charge the demands made upon us. I will however not endeavour nor am capable to describe such a scene: pray heaven, that we may never see it represented before our eyes!

We have more domestic circumstances not mentioned, that may be found very untoward in such a contest; but which it might go too near the quick to touch upon: I shall leave them for the thoughts of others. I have likewise confined myself at home. Not a word has been said concerning our East Indian settlements or our West Indian islands (to fling our African territories out of the question, as trifles unworthy of notice) nor concerning the danger of any of them either from France or Spain or both or in the case supposed even from our own North American colonies; for however prodigiously important these possessions may be to us, they are nevertheless no more than a feather in the balance compared with what may happen on our own ground of Great Britain.

What



What shall we then do in this critical case or how are we to steer our course? My answer in the first place is undoubtedly to let the Portuguese and the Spaniards decide their dispute between themselves and for us not to meddle in it with our arms. A rage for war has been the ruling passion of our government ever since the revolution. It is what has brought us to our present deplorable condition; we seem nevertheless neither satisfied with our follies nor restored to our understandings. Three summers only are past, since in spite of our immense debts and every consideration of prudence we were upon the point of taking part in the war between the Turks and the Russians; as if no squabble was to happen in any part of the globe without our having a hand in it. We happily escaped then; but now in ten times a worse conjuncture we are again urged about the Portuguese and the Spaniards.

Portugal has ever since the present contest between us and our colonies been open  
to

to the Provincials, like the rest of Europe ; until of very late : no place was perhaps more particularly the seat of their correspondence, than Lisbon. Ofsensible edicts were published there as in other parts ; but no more obeyed or executed. This court however quarrelling with that of Madrid, seizing its claims, difcomfiting its ships and troops and fearing a revenge and a return for these things thought it time to look out for assistance on its own side ; in case that matters should become more serious between them. The subject of our madness is but too public and too well known to all the world : no great depth of policy was required in the minister of Portugal to strike that string. He suddenly drove all the American vessels out of Lisbon and the other ports of his master and forbad in good earnest their entrance thither again. He intends that this forced and late civility (thus forced upon him in effect by the Spaniards) should be repaid by us in the true sterling coin of British fleets and armies. It is however to be hoped, that our English

Plombals



Plombals will not be so duped by the Portuguese ; but that they will testify the same care and concern for the safety of their country, as he does for the defence of his.

But will not France interfere and take the part of Spain against Portugal ; even if we should ourselves not be the first to begin ? I answer, so let it ; when we shall have the better leisure and be the more free to pursue our present, favourite folly. Have we at this season not carved out work enough for ourselves in our own concerns without seeking for more of the same sort in those of others ? Happily and fully busied in our provinces, as we are ; is this a time to take upon us the affairs of Portugal ? Is our own race so easily run, that we have need to bear another nation on our back ? If it is a point with us to proceed in perpetual opposition to the French ; if we must be sure to do one thing, because they do another ; let us continue at peace when they go to war : that will in my poor opinion be the best and the wisest contradiction in our counsels

counfels to theirs. Great Britain has no doubt many and noble advantages; especially all the parts of our dominion confidered or what were fo; until we wantonly caft away North America: we have nevertheless undone ourselves with debt, by making or partaking of mifchief; a fate therefore well deferved by us and a due effect of the admirable order of things; which by a natural courfe constantly tends to the common good restraining the conduct and abating the power of thofe, who counteract that great end. France is alfo a very fine region, one of the prime parts of Europe or of our globe. They have by wars and by broils however encumbered in the fame manner their government the moft of any in the world next to ours. The only difference between us befides the great magnitude of our debt above theirs feems to be; that they have done this through a vain ambition of advancing their nation and their monarch: whereas we have moft meanly facrificed our lives, our fubftance, our ftate and ourselves for the pleafure or the interefts of



of strangers. If we now again engage in blood on an occasion foreign to us; this will be a further offence against the welfare of the world, which will likewise not fail to find a proper retribution. Our conduct, our ingratitude, injustice and cruelty towards the Americans, are fully sufficient to sink us into an abyfs; like a millstone about our necks: let us then not add another weight to this, which already is of itself but too big for us to bear. A threadbare proverb says; that bought experience is the best: we have full dearly paid for ours. Let then our neighbours and rivals proceed in their own and their old way, if they please; but let us late at least profit by the double experience of ourselves and of them and would to God, that we had prudently done it sooner in the day instead of finding ourselves under a downright necessity to do it now!

But will not Russia assist us against France? I answer that country to be at a great distance; to have itself the wounds of  
a late

war to heal, to want at home perhaps no other means or measure than peace for the multiplication of its own people throughout an almost immense, but empty empire. I will nevertheless not pretend to guess at the counsels of the Russian cabinet, but neither have all the branches of the house of Bourbon nor Sweden nor Genoa been taken into the contrary account nor has any thing been said concerning the Court of Vienna nor of any other powers allied or wishing well to France or to Spain. So much however is sure; that any nation will ever find foreign help or dependence very precarious; when it shall itself be weak enough to neglect or to act against its own interest.

Is not however this measure proper for preserving the trade of Portugal? In return to which give me leave in the first place to repeat that most emphatical, but just question of an infallible authority; what can it profit any one to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul? Our  
risque



risque and our stake are in the present case too big. The trade to Oporto and to Lisbon will not be at all more endangered by our keeping out of this contest; than the very safety of Great Britain itself will by our becoming parties in it. The time and the conjuncture are exceedingly against us. A nation can ill think of defending others, which is destroying itself. This is my special and particular answer on the subject, but peace besides is in general the business of a mercantile people: new sources of commerce will then open and offer themselves, as any old ones may happen to perish or to be lost. The best harvest of such States often is, when others are employed in fighting about they know not what. The Dutch can well witness to the truth of this on the last occasion of the kind and they will in all appearance be able further to confirm it on the present. Our national debt was begun in the war following the Revolution: happy for this nation, if the first author of so fatal a measure had never been born! It has been regularly  
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and considerably increased in every successive war since; but which of all those many parts has ever been repaid to us by any trade, that was gained or retained by the means of it? If such a one is to be found; why has it not enabled us to discharge itself or to what era is that event reserved? No one now has so much as a conception of war without borrowing. We set out this first year for a gentle beginning with five additional duties\*; but if we proceed thus adding debt to debt, funds to funds and taxes to taxes; how long for the love of heaven can possibly be left us not only any trade, but even any property itself? If we never were at war; would no nation purchase our merchandise, when we had what they wanted and we undersold others? Commerce is the offspring of peace and war is her irreconcilable enemy; but a man might write a whole book on this subject and every word of it be reasonable.

\* On the land, cards, dice, coaches and stamps.

How



How then do we stand about treaties ? This may prove a long and a perplexed narrative : I will however endeavour to relate, if you shall have the patience to read it. It need not be said, how much good part of Europe was on the death of Charles the Second of Spain agitated, concerning the succession of that monarchy. Portugal was greatly and the States general were considerably interested on the occasion. The English secure in their own island were least concerned in the case and might have made their market and their profit of almost the whole world ; if the people then at our helm had so pleased : the British politics have however since the Revolution never been of such a kind. The interests of our neighbours at that time prevailed over our own. In the year seventeen hundred and three we entered into a defensive and offensive alliance with the Emperor, the States General and Portugal ; wherein all four first agreed to prevent any prince of French extraction from becoming king of Spain and then the other three made magnificent

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assurances

assurances to the king of Portugal concerning his claims and possessions and that expressly notwithstanding any treaties then subsisting between Portugal and Spain. Every thing of this was perfectly and easily practicable; if the contracting powers had appointed their own prince, as they then intended to have done; but *Dis aliter visum*—fate and fortune determined differently from them. The French family took possession of the throne; which they have ever since kept. The foundation therefore failing the superstructure of course fell with it. As the great circumstance and the ground-work of all did not take place, the parties could not be obliged nor had in their power to make good the other secondary conditions. We their successors stand in the place of our respective ancestors. It might on demand made be duly answered by us, something like what fable relates to have by its own father Æsop been once done; when he said to certain persons: do you stop up the rivers and my master will then drink dry the sea. We were in the alliance only one of four; but



but let the king of Portugal begin with turning out the king of Spain and we may well undertake to complete the remainder of the contract. This treaty from the very first therefore soon became no better than waste paper: the assurance or guaranty contained in it has nevertheless been brought forward and urged on the present occasion. That circumstance made it the more necessary to take some notice on the subject; but so far we may safely conclude, that we are evidently and perfectly free from all obligation whatsoever.

At the same time however and dated on the same day Great Britain and the States General contracted likewise another, a defensive alliance with the king of Portugal; by which besides both making war with all their force against the enemy they stipulated to assist him with a particular number of ships or of troops in conjunction; if France or Spain attacked his dominions at home or abroad. In return his Portuguese majesty likewise engaged to make war against

gainst the enemy with all his force ; if France or Spain should attack the kingdom of Great Britain or the states of the United Provinces. This treaty is expressly declared to be perpetual : it was however entered into on the same occasion with the other and was designed to preserve the respective parties from the dangerous union of the two great powers before spoken of ; but it was in all appearance never meant, that either Great Britain or the United Provinces should risque their very existence about insignificant palavers in the neighbourhood of St. Sacrament or concerning national limits at the lower end of the river Plate ; which had time out of mind been a constant bone of contention between Spain and Portugal and long enough before the alliance now considering was contracted or conceived. Great Britain has since had war with both France and Spain at once and likewise with one of them only ; when Portugal notwithstanding any such treaty declared none against either. Is one ally to be obliged and the other to be loose or are we



we the only people in the world, whose duty and whose doom it is to meddle in every idle difference under the sun? What complaints for a great number of years have our Portugal merchants been perpetually making concerning this court and its minister and their neglect and breach of treaties? They will therefore no doubt be very far from now desiring us to become the dupes or to be offered, as victims on the altar of those same persons. We had from the first originally no engagement except in conjunction with the Dutch; but the fleet and the land forces specified were to have been furnished by us in common. Are we on this occasion then to act alone; while that prudent people stand by laughing in their sleeves and making their advantage of our broils, our mischiefs and but too probably of our final overthrow? This nevertheless is the last treaty of alliance between Great Britain and Portugal; for commercial agreements are of another kind and are not mixed with articles of this nature. It has never been confirmed since; but is that

on which his most faithful majesty and his minister must require us to become parties in this their quarrel with Spain.

Although however there is no guaranty of the Portuguese dominions by Great Britain (for beyond doubt the parts of the offensive treaty before cited fell with the whole) although there never was a promise of any specific number of troops or of ships to be furnished by us separately to Portugal; yet both these points have in the strongest manner taken place with respect to Spain. There is a treaty of seventeen hundred and twenty-nine and therefore later than the other, in which *we guarantee all its kingdoms, states and dominions in what parts of the world soever situate together with their rights and privileges of commerce and in which we engage separately to furnish his Catholic majesty with eight thousand troops and four thousand horse or ships of war or transports or money at his option; "if he shall be attacked or molested by any power or under any pretext whatsoever;"* words which no expression



pressions of the defensive treaty with Portugal can look in the face. I lay however no stress on these stipulations. We shall perhaps be told that this treaty is indeed not repealed, such not being the practice with respect to treaties; but that it is antiquate, like acts of parliament in Scotland. I speak no word to the contrary: I only desire it to be considered how like that is to saying, that princes keep or neglect contracts of this kind, as they please. I give up this argument nor have I any mind to put the vivacity of our ministers upon arming in defence of the poor, injured Spaniards.

All this however is nothing, it is sunshine and the broadway compared to the perplexity respecting the right itself. The north, the left hand of the river Plate according to its course downwards (say some) belongs to the Portuguese. A notable point indeed for Great Britain to be undone upon; which has in all appearance been disputed ever since the first habitation

of those regions by Europeans or at least so far backward, as that no man can trace it to the beginning ! How long time are we to take for the trial of this title ? What can in its own nature be more uncertain, than the claims to newly discovered countries ; where a full settlement has not preserved an undisturbed possession ? I shall not pretend to tell the long and tedious tale of this dispute : I cannot however help observing ; that there lies now before me accidentally taken down in my study a map printed and published about forty years ago by an honest Englishman. Any one may be bound ; that neither the author nor the engraver of it was bribed either by Portugal or by Spain. They certainly copied from other more ancient charts ; but I am sure, that this proposition is there plainly contradicted. So let the matter remain for me. The reader is no doubt heartily tired ; but he is hardly more so than the writer is out of patience to see the very fate and safety of our country made to depend upon such trifling stuff and contemptible considerations.



derations. Here then I intrench myself, that whenever any persons and especially princes or ministers quit the ground of the public good; they ought to be very sure, that they have got better to go upon.

This whole consideration plainly proves the utter absurdity of our island entering in, to defensive or offensive alliances with the countries on the continent. I desire to offer therefore some observations on that subject and about treaties in general; which are so perpetually interpreted according to the inclinations of princes, that they are little or no better than the law books of the Judge; who, whenever he found in his reading a disputable point, is said to have wrote over against it a case for a friend. What blood and money of this imposed upon and almost betrayed nation were during the war before the last lavished in the service and on account of the Queen of Hungary? That was then the reigning madness. With what contempt nevertheless did the court of Vienna receive our request  
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of assistance in return against France at the beginning of the last war. What are all your American squabbles to us; was truly and justly enough, whether or no very gratefully answered. It is often said abroad; that our generous subsidy of near seven hundred thousand pounds a year preserved the king of Prussia in his greatest exigencies. He is now established in peace; but I believe it would be very difficult to persuade that politic prince to risque again his security and his crown at our call. It is the ambition and the intrigues of courts which commonly embarrass the subjects of them with contracts of this kind. Can then a few place-men have the power so to devote a whole people; that notwithstanding any exception of their own necessity (an excuse acknowledged in all cases) notwithstanding the objection of an immediate precipice lying before them, they shall absolutely be bound to proceed and directly to leap into the gulph at the will or the whistle of strangers and foreigners? Be it so and that human happiness and the welfare and the safety



safety of millions are of no more consideration. The constitution of England puts this power in the king, the king lodges it with his minister and *Quicquid delirant reges.*—

Whatever princes or their ministers please to do, the people must abide the brunt of ; whether or no they have themselves any consent or concurrence in the act. I submit, I do not presume to dispute this point ; but a prince of Barbary is said to have laughed at a French king for having spent in fitting out a fleet to bombard his city ten times the money, that he would himself any day have taken to have burnt it to the ground. I wonder what is the whole value of the particular and immediate object of the present squabble between Spain and Portugal. I will not now examine ; whether some Englishmen would be very fond of changing for it their own real estates ; might we in some manner however not imitate the politics of Poltis an ancient king of Tnrace, who being desired to take part in the Trojan war declined it ; but that he himself and the rest of the world might sleep peaceably

ably in their beds and neither Menelaus nor Paris be forced to fight for the want of a wife, offered to send each of them one out of his own number ; of which he had plenty. What immense regions have we in the wastes and wilds of America of certainly full as little use to us, as the meanest among the wives of honest Poltis was to him ? Could not we then outdo the generosity of the Thracian prince and accommodate both the combatants with a handfomer and a better possession, than the subject of all this bustle and that exceedingly more to our own convenience and advantage, than the undoing ourselves in the contention between them ? It is most devoutly to be wished, that governments would take pattern by the prudence of individuals, when they are seconds in a quarrel ; that instead of increasing the common mischief and havock by their own engaging in it they would only stand by to see fair play and put an end to the dispute ; when the two parties had sufficiently played the fool on each side. All treaties however are undoubtedly to be  
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interpreted within the bounds of right : no man or minister or nation can make an agreement to maintain another in wrong. Every state therefore requiring any other to sacrifice itself in its quarrel is at least highly accountable for the justice of its cause in the beginning and the rectitude of its conduct in the progress and (I should think too) that the importance of the object in contest was in some degree adequate to the sacrifice so demanded of another. We are in all appearance then distant enough from the particular danger alluded to ; if our fleets and our armies shall but be kept back, until Portugal has fairly and clearly proved these points to be on its side in the present dispute. What a history will be told to our posterity of the last period of their ancestors, as a prosperous or an independent people ; if the beginning of it shall consist in the wisdom of this American war and its concluding catastrophe be a Spanish and a Portuguese broil about the bounds of Buenos Aires and the Brasils ? Our country however is famous  
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for freedom and for a share in the government of itself: heaven therefore forbid that we should have the hard fate first to be involved in inextricable difficulties by the injustice and the inconsiderateness of our own administration and then in the very act of struggling under that circumstance to receive our death's wound through the unreasonableness and the obstinacy of the minister of a foreign prince!

I have for some time imagined you standing near me and ready to ask; what will then your old friends of America say to these peaceable politics, who under their present extreme distress cannot but wish for a French war or any means, which may employ and weaken their enemy or will they be more acceptable to your brother patriots; who are often charged with approving or disapproving of no measures, but as they may serve to oppose and to embarrass the administration? As to the Americans; I heartily commiserate their case. You know, whether I have scrupled to declare my opinion



nion concerning the justice of their cause and the right of their self-defence. The writer sincerely wishes them safety, prosperity and in good time greatness even to a degree hitherto unknown in the history of mankind: he wishes however these things by other means than the instant and the utter destruction of England; if the weak, but faithful efforts of an insignificant individual can at all contribute to prevent or to delay the fate of his country. He is perfectly sensible of what very little hopes there are on that head; but no man need much to excuse himself for throwing away his breath or his time in the pursuit of such a purpose nor does the clamour for the good of the public seem at present so loud or so violent, but that even a feeble voice may at least make itself to be heard on the subject; although any further attention or effect must be left to the wisdom and the policy of our superiors.

With respect to my brethren in patriotism; the writer professes to know no  
friend

friendship, no familiarity, no union, no connection which is to take place of or to interfere with that first and greatest of obligations, the duty of every man to his country : they must all melt and dissolve away in the presence of that bright and powerful object. Many of our subordinate ties are beyond doubt most deservedly dear to us ; but then they have a different sphere of their own and are contracted or arise on other ground : party however degenerates into downright faction and combination against the public ; when it is made or permitted to clash with the common and general advantage of the whole. A great traveller tells us ; that one of the most remarkable among the wonders of nature is the vast variety of the human visage : our minds within are however formed in as different moulds ; as our outward figure. The writer does not nor has had an opportunity to know the thoughts of almost any other person on this head of our avoiding or engaging in a Portuguese war. The ostensible or pretended opinions of men speaking



ing for pay or in hopes of it are of less account, than the whistling of the wind; but he desires the indulgence of any honest man, whose sentiments may on that subject be other than his own. The conceptions of each person are given to him for his guide: the writer declares his own on the common claim of every one concerned in the event: he can only expose the reasons of his opinion: it is upon them that the right and the wrong must be determined and the good of the public is the true and the great touchstone, by which they are to be tried.

A good deal of what has been said is likewise applicable to the introduction of Russians upon the continent of America or to any other means of forwarding a French war and some important parts of it moreover go in general, against at all risking such a contest in the conjuncture now obtaining; if it can by foresight or prudence be any way avoided. Here then comes on our second point and a most essential ques-

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tion it is; I mean, whether France induced by the occasion will at its own hour and of its own choice sooner or later not probably begin or seek hostilities with us, either for the assisting and confirming the separation between us and our former provinces or in hopes under our present disadvantage of making some impressions on ourselves nearer home. I say in the first place then; let us at least by no additional act of our own hasten that circumstance. There are always chance and time; until events have irrevocably taken place. It is but too possible; that we may with our own hands do ourselves so much mischief, as fully to satisfy both the revenge and the interest of our rivals; although their interfering would undoubtedly render this very bad matter much worse on our part. Almost the only point left us even to pray heaven for seems to be, that we may without the intervening of any other nation settle among ourselves all our present most unhappy domestic concerns; in the hopes (however slender) that our state after its  
 confu-



confusion and distraction, its deficiency and bankruptcy (if such shall happen) after being (as it were) purged by fire may according to the fable of the Phoenix arise again out of its own ashes and that these also may not for the completion of our misfortunes be scattered abroad by the hands of a foreign enemy. So much with respect to provoking this mischief; I have however a further answer.

It is related, that Alexander the Great finding himself not able to untie the famous Gordian knot made short work by drawing his sword and cutting it asunder. The knot in question must not be cut with the sword: there are but too many swords drawn on the subject already: it must be solved by peace. Why do we not ourselves make peace with our colonies; why do we by that means not come between them and the French; while there is yet an opportunity or possibility of doing it? That measure will take out the sting of France: she will then neither be so inclined to attack us

nor so dangerous an enemy; if she does. This is the plain, the open, the ready road: while every other way is impeded by armies, by enemies, by dangers and difficulties not to be overcome. What more than common infatuation or phrenzy can then divert us from it?

This is also the fit season for the purpose: when we are in a course of success, when victory appears to be hovering over our banners. Need we to be put in mind of the chance of war or the changeableness of fortune? Have [these things never been known to us in the same country of America? We have with veteran armies, chosen commanders and a prodigious artillery made an impression on a people; who are in their very first rudiments of war. I know, how difficult in the moment of advantage is the bringing men to a due sense of their own state or that of their adversaries. I shall not therefore dwell on the question; whether the Provincials may not recover themselves, may not amend their mistakes, strengthen



strengthen their weaknesses, be instructed by experience ; whether the tide may not turn and set against us, which now is in our favour nor how fatal even a small miscarriage may at such a distance prove to us ; but the point which I must press and insist upon is ; that we should see all these our victories and advantages in the field only as so many steps, so many approaches, so many advances towards a French war ; which plainly appears to lie between us and the conquest of our colonies ; if we or our rulers can be persuaded to consider our situation in its proper light. How often have our ancestors carried fire and sword into the heart of France ? Have they never shaken its government to the very foundation or set their own king upon its throne ? How did that nation suffer by the arms of our fathers no longer ago than in the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth ? So lately as in the last war of how many noble, external dependencies did we with a surprising course of success strip that state almost reducing it to the bounds of its European

and Continental territory? This ancient enmity, this perpetual rivalry, these repeated mischiefs, all these old and new grudges are they in an instant then buried and forgotten or when had that people so fair and so tempting an opportunity of a return and revenge upon us? They may rest, until we have proceeded beyond a possibility of retreat; they may look on to see, whether our insurgent provinces will be able to do the business without their help; they may for a while give us fair words or act under the cover of individuals; but does or can any one doubt, whether they will openly and avowedly draw the sword; whenever the season and the conjuncture shall require it? Do not therefore let us deceive ourselves; for to that point tend all the triumphant proceedings, of which we are at this time so vain and so proud. What will then become of our present hopes and superiority or does any one believe; that the first cannon fired by France will not totally change the whole face of American affairs? I do not confine this question

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to our own colonies. We have called the Canadians to arms; but which way will they turn them, when they shall see the banners of France displayed and waving in the dispute? This danger on the side of our neighbours and rivals is the fore at our heart; which is rendered worse, more desperate and in likelihood (as it were) of immediate mortification by every blow, which we are so inconsiderately giving to the provincial part of our country; but which demands a lenient hand and may only be healed by the balm of peace.

It is however reported, that our American minister says no to this: but that France and Spain will so fear or dislike the example for their own colonies and provinces, as not to desire or to aid the revolt and the independence of ours; to the subduing of which therefore we may with safety nevertheless proceed. Permit me then to enter more particularly into this subject. What does France now possess in North America? Not an acre of land. What had

she ever there? According to her own historian Charlevoix,\* more territory than is contained in the continent of Europe. When and how did she lose it? In the last war by the arms of Great Britain, who was on the occasion very powerfully helped by her own colonies in that part of the globe; but with which she is now in contention. What is in all appearance the shortest and the surest way for France to get again what was at that time so taken from her? undoubtedly herself to unite in her turn for its recovery with those very colonies, by whose means and assistance she was before deprived of it. She has here then nothing to risk, all to gain and in her choice a most likely measure for success. I think; that there are not many syllogisms in that argument. We however dispossessed her in the same contest of her best settlements in other parts of the world besides. So far for France; next with respect to Spain.

\* See Histoire de la Nouvelle France, p. 1.



We had at the end of the last war taken the Havannah. How many days sail is it from thence to Vera Cruz ? There is only the gulph of Mexico between them. How many days march is it from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico ? Suppose it to be about two hundred and fifty miles. The naval force of both France and Spain was totally annihilated. Their flags hardly shewed their heads in the sea. They were absolutely disabled from sending assistance to their distant possessions. These were exposed to us almost as a prey. What under an immediate miracle could have hindered us from being with proper preparations masters of Mexico the next campaign ? Had lord Chatham remained at the helm ; he would have been a bold man, who should have ensured it to the Spaniards for another summer. What a blow would there have been ; how would it have humbled that proud empire ! I am not setting forth of what benefit such an acquisition would have been to us nor saying whether or no mines of gold and of silver might  
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to a nation indebted more than one hundred and forty millions sterling be of as much service, as to another: it must however have put into our power a peace on what terms, we had pleased; but neither of these is the point. Ask the Spaniards what price their crown puts on Mexico: that is the question; but with which they might perhaps be more amazed, than they would be ready to return an answer to it. The Havanna, I say, was our own: Manilla was the same, of which we seem never to have known the value, Florida yet remains in our hands. Are then all these damages and dangers not remembered for the long space of twelve revolving years or is it credible, that the governments of Madrid and Versailles should be more afraid of the future and fancied evils to arise from our colonies alone without us; than they are of the present power of Great Britain with all these same colonies in its train and which in part they most severely felt and in part most narrowly escaped, so short a time since? Are these rising republics to become so prodigiously



giously powerful as to swallow up not only Canada, Louisiana, Florida, the West and East Indian settlements of France and Spain (for these conquests we ourselves actually made in the last war) but likewise Peru, Mexico and the Lord knows what more ; as easily as the song says, that the dragon of Wantley devoured houses and churches ? Be it so ; this is indeed a most sincere and genuine compliment to democratical forms of government, which the writer is not a person to dispute ; but how many ages of man must the most sanguine enthusiast on such a subject allow for the performance of all these miracles ? Must not to-day pass before to-morrow comes and the morrow precede the time after it ? Does not every event keep its due order and succession in the chain of things ? Are the princes or the ministers of France and of Spain so strangely formed in their sight, as immensely to magnify objects, which are at a vast distance from them ; but to be stark and stone blind towards those, which stare them in the face or that lie at their

their feet (as stumbling blocks) and over which they have themselves so lately before fallen? What preposterous and inconsistent conceptions! I trust then, that I may here well appeal to the public; not only whether the reasoning concerning the neutral disposition of these two monarchies supposed to arise from apprehensions for their own colonies is not beyond reply answered; but moreover whether this circumstance does not plainly bear the contrary way and must not be a strong incitement for those powers to support or to unite themselves against us with our revolted provinces.

Why do we however debate about possibilities or probabilities, when we have the fact itself before our eyes? In the West Indies do not the French and the Spanish governors receive into their ports and with a high-hand protect the privateers of our colonies? Do our wise ministers themselves or would they have others to believe; that they do not therein act with the inclinations and according to the intentions of their respective



tive courts? Turn to Europe; are not the Americans equally welcome in the harbours and the dominions of those crowns there? Are they not furnished with arms, with ammunition, with every thing wanted by them and without which they could not continue their contention with us? I do not refer to their privateer at Bilboa, their agents at Paris, to our ships carried into their ports as prizes or to any other particular circumstances; for whoever disputes this point, must be ready to deny the sun to shine by day or the stars by night. The doubt made on this head however not having been, how far the hands of these states will follow their hearts, but about their inclinations themselves; never surely was argument more fully advanced in the face of matter of fact, than that now in question. I will not ask; whether it were to be wished, that any person entertaining such an opinion concerning the interests of France was in the counsels of that country, rather than of her own: such a one might there nevertheless contribute  
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to peace, I mean, if he did not in the neighbourhood of Versailles very soon learn another language; but whither can that doctrine at this time tend in England, except towards the encouraging us in going to such lengths and extremities against the Americans, as must in the end lay us open to the arms or the mercy of our enemies? I hope it to be here observed; that the writer is now endeavouring to raise such a jealousy of our neighbours for the purpose not of making (which has much too often been done) but of preventing mischief between us and them. I return then from whence I set out on the subject before us; that peace with her own colonies and not a confidence in the intentions or the professions of France is in this present conjuncture the proper means of security for Great Britain.

On what terms however are we to aim at this desirable object? Is it then the unreasonableness of the proposition, which makes it necessary perpetually to repeat; that



that the more fair, more equitable, more indulgent the conditions shall be towards our colonies, so much the better will they likewise be for ourselves. The seat of empire draws every thing to itself; whether wealth, power or honour. The money brought by the balance of trade or by any other means into Scotland, into Ireland; the riches of our West Indies, the rapine of our East Indies and even a proportion of tribute from Africa all center in England. North America now not numbered with these, was until our own wantonness to be reckoned in a high rank among them. Liberty and commerce are the two sources of riches. The more free therefore the charters and the constitutions, the more extensive the trade and the navigation of our provinces; so much the more wealth will flow first into these subordinate states and then from thence into the parent country. The seat of government as naturally and as certainly attracts the gold and the silver of its dependencies; as the magnet draws its proper metal or the mariner's needle points

points towards the pole of the earth. Ambition, pleasure, fashion, curiosity and many other means complete; whatever trade, taxes and salaries leave unperformed. Such is and must be the common course of things throughout the whole world. These causes and effects follow one another; as the spark flies upward or the stone falls to the ground. Our North American settlements were a particular example on this subject, for by emitting paper money and making it a legal tender among themselves; they evidently sent to the parent state every single shilling of their surplus. There is besides another most material consideration in the present case, which is; that it must be some truly liberal plan and proposal on the ground here pointed out; if any thing can once more possibly reconcile and willingly bring back to their former obedience our discontented provinces. Some men may at this moment look on it as a strange language to say; let us then stay our hands, restrain our fleets and our armies, repeal our oppressive or offensive acts of parliament, restore



store the charters, extend the trade and use every other means within the compass of political medicine to heal the wounds of these our now hostile and exasperated, but lately most faithful and most affectionate colonies. I have nevertheless put down these words upon my paper : they keep their colour : I do not perceive them to turn red, either as written in blood or as blushing for shame. It would however very ill become me to trifle with you and the public : I shall make no scruple to add ; may heaven in futurity so prosper me and mine, as I believe the steps here pointed out to be even in this instant of victory the true interest of Great Britain. Shall I venture one degree further ? How many among the authors and the instruments of these miseries exult at this season in their own success ? Will it nevertheless be an extravagance totally fit for Moor-fields and more so than certain measures ; if any one should make a question, whether some of them may never live to see the day, when they shall for the sake of themselves, if not of their coun-

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try, much wish to have considered and to have executed these counsels; which will undoubtedly now be looked upon by them with utter contempt.

These things are however written not with hope or expectation, but with regret. There was in the crown of England an Indian jewel of inestimable value; but it has idly and inconsiderately been cast away. The period is according to all appearance past, in which we shall ever see North America subject to Great Britain. On the one hand the humble plan here recommended is far below the flight of our high-minded ministers and on the other our colonies have declared their independence. Distressed, vanquished, driven to flight (as they are) they will nevertheless seek every resource afforded by the whole world, will offer themselves to any state and almost on any terms rather than to return again under our dominion. Self-interest, fear, rage, revenge, all the strongest passions implanted in our breasts, the most violent motives  
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of the human frame are throughout America now at work. I had almost said ; that the earth will open and swallow up its offspring, before they shall revert to the power of those, from whom they have received such a reward for the first benefits perhaps ever conferred by any body and succession of men upon another. What other means then can in such a most critical case be adopted or pursued ? All men must take their counsel of the time. Let us not consume ourselves in vainly endeavouring to reduce by force those ; whom our own conduct has driven from our dominion. It cannot be too often inculcated both on account of its importance and of our being on the very brink of danger ; but it is there that France waits for us, as a tyger watches for his prey. It is a hard word to bring out and there is perhaps no one person in all Britain or even in America more sensible of the very many and very great advantages formerly received or the yet more and much greater to have in future been expected from our colonies spread over that almost immense

western continent ; than the writer : he is nevertheless forced to say ; let us on the terms of an amicable separation make with them the most advantageous peace, that we can : since we are brought into such a situation ; that there is not the least appearance or likelihood of our doing better. So however shall we instead of having a war with France and with Spain and with our Colonies all united together against us have none with any of them ; at least unless we please and unless being in some manner got out of our present scrape our rulers shall wilfully and purposely run us into another. It will in the case proposed become necessary for us carefully to consider all the parts of our government, our revenue, our expences, our commerce and every other article and to contract ourselves within our new compass. This is a very wide theme ; I will not now enter into it ; our men of genius at the helm however need not to hunt after a war for the trial or the exercise of their talents ; any one may be bound, that on the occasion here mentioned they will



will find full employment for all their wisdom. How little did the writer but a very few years ago believe, that he should ever have lived to offer this advice. Sure I am; that my heart most heavily dictates it and that my hand most unwillingly obeys. I will not say; may the whole loss be upon those, that have occasioned it; since who can answer or atone for one part in a million of such a mischief? I trust however, that it will be very far from lying upon one, who only counsels us not to do worse; but to obey the irresistible necessity of our case after having in vain used his utmost endeavours to prevent our being brought into it. Must I or no then say farewell America? If however fate has so resolved; if it is no longer given for Great Britain to prosper by your means; I was about to pray for blessings on your own head; but that might border on presumption: I shall in such a case therefore confine myself to wish, that you may merit them; when I have no doubt, but they will follow nor is it fit, that they should otherwise be thrown away upon you.

May you merit them by your freedom, your justice, your mercy; by a contempt of money, of power, of titles and of every kind of corruption; I say, may you deserve them by not burthening with heavy taxes yourselves or your subjects, by not meddling in mischiefs foreign to you and above all by bearing a gentle hand over your dependencies! The author cannot flatter himself, that his words will live; until you shall be beyond your difficulties and placed in a state of prosperity: the things themselves nevertheless are written in adamant and will be a law not only for you, but for ages and perhaps for worlds time without end to come after you. May you however besides perpetually remember the former friendship borne by you to your parent country and may we ourselves at length become wiser, although by the severe experience of our follies and misfortunes!

This measure notwithstanding is far preferable to an attempt of conquering our colonies not only on account both of the difficulties



difficulties in the way and of the danger from France and Spain so often represented, but likewise because they would in such a case be nothing worth to us; even if it could be compassed without pains; if their fortifications would crumble into pieces at the sound of our trumpets or their armies should on a morning be found dead in their camps; as it is delivered down to have happened with some others in former times. If they are reduced by arms, they must be so ruled: that consequence is clear and certain. How then shall we find and furnish a force numerous or strong enough for that end? Where are the recruits to be raised? We want men at home, of which it will demand a considerable body and consumption. It cannot be intended to enslave America by its own countrymen; such a means will ill answer, they do not seem in the least to be of that humour. No; but we have cut their throats and so will we likewise govern them by foreigners. Even our own Machiavels however certainly do not mean to put that great continent under a stronger

power of others, than we have there of our own. Suppose that strange troops might perhaps serve towards over-awing the natives; how should however we ourselves in that case controul those strangers? Would not they in good measure be our masters, as well as theirs? We must keep on the spot a force sufficient to command both; but from whence would the soldiery necessary for that purpose be supplied? What is then to be done for the money? Leave our ministers and their ways-and-means men to find that. America would on the new establishment no doubt be expected to pay its own charges and to buy its own chains: we would fund it, as we have done England. This may shine in the eyes of some persons, who fancy themselves to perceive their own profit or plunder in such a scheme; but would not these noble arrangements intercept and consume all the benefit or surplus, which should come hither home to us? Would it not be lucky; if we did not boot to it something of our own into the bargain?

What



What should we for provinces kept by such difficult and expensive means then be any better ; than if we were to part and to continue in peace and in friendship with each other ? A further mischief however is yet behind. How long would these things last ? The first French war (and we are rarely or never very long without one) they would cry liberty, would fling off their fetters and join our enemies with far more rancour and resentment than ever they bore us before. How would in an instant then all this fine enchantment be dissolved and vanish ! Suppose we should this winter take possession of Philadelphia and cut off the northern from the southern colonies. Must nevertheless our armies there not moulder and our strength wither away ; will not the provinces rise again with tenfold force against us ; if we should have France and Spain to combat, while they shall be supported and assisted by them ? Let us then open wide our arms to our countrymen of America ; if they will return under our government : let us at all events

events however make peace with them on the best conditions in our power: this is the way of our safety; but the idea of conquest as it is in itself most detestable; so it is in every light likewise absolutely absurd and destructive for us.

One gentleman however here paves the way before us. It is the moral of his story and the burthen of his song, that North America never was of any value or advantage to Great Britain and he tells us, that converts are every day making to the proposal of separating them from one another\*. No doubt our ministers are great men at making converts. They have in less than three years converted thirteen provinces of most dutiful subjects into independent republics, thirteen colonies of most faithful and affectionate friends into declared and determined enemies; they have converted the opinions of persons the most desirous to maintain the union be-

\* See Series of Answers, p. 9.



tween Great Britain and North America into inclinations to separate the one from the other, lest they should both be totally undone together by a most ill-judged and destructive civil-war between them. What wonderful conversions in so short a space of time ! What are all those of St. Xavier himself that famous modern maker of converts in the Roman legends, when compared with these ? He did indeed his wonders in the East Indies ; whereas our converters have chosen North America for the scene of their miracles. Having however had such extraordinary success there, it is possible enough ; that they may before long be tempted to pursue the steps of Xavier towards the rising sun : in which case any one may to their miraculous powers oppose (I will not say) a more sure word of prophecy, but a well grounded argument of experience ; that they will lose our eastern, as they most probably have already done our western empire. I don't however know whether the gentleman here hinted at may not mean to claim to himself our domestic

mettic conversions, as the effects of his own rhetoric. I must in that case confess myself to think, that he wrongs our ministers of their right: I will nevertheless meddle no farther in the matter, being unwilling to disturb the happiness of any one arising from so natural a source, as the importance of a man to himself. I do for one however acknowledge nothing, but the last necessity and the extreme danger of my country to have extorted from me such a proposition.

Is not however the administration itself now negotiating and may we not any day hear news of an accommodation by mutual concessions on both sides and by the parties meeting on the middle ground; as it is commonly done on such occasions? Is not there a commission gone to America for that end? In answer to these questions I desire liberty fully and freely to explain myself on the subjects. I say then, that from the beginning of these most unhappy broils to the present moment our ministers constantly



stantly appear to have made no other or lesser demands, than in the outset absolute power over our colonies and since unconditional submission from them; two brethren born of the same parents and much resembling each other; but the younger having a figure even yet the more fierce, more grim and ugly of the two. I mean in the first place taxation and binding in all cases without representation; by which claims I directly understand absolute power. I define my terms nor therefore endeavour to deceive. Yes, (it will be said) absolute power in the parliament. It is true; but (I reply) in a parliament, of which our colonies make no part. How has besides this word in former or how will it in future times differ from that of administration? this demand however drove our colonies into what some men stile rebellion; but by what name (according to the expression of a most ancient poet) the Gods call it, I do not pretend to be so inspired or so learned, as to say. This was the doing of the elder:

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let us now see the performances of the other offspring of that worthy family.

I will not carry you very far backward. In the autumn of last year however, of one thousand seven hundred and seventy five the Congress of the Continent sent an application to the crown; which bore plain marks of being their last. It came for the more formality and weight by the governor of Pennsylvania. The contents of it humbly demanded means of accommodation. No answer was deigned to be returned. Our ministers kept the most obstinate silence nor would express or hint any terms, on which they would consent to a reconciliation. Unconditional submission was in all appearance the meaning at the bottom; but which was not a fox to let out of the bag for the public hunt. It shewed at times however its head under a claim of the colonies laying down their arms as the first step towards peace and in some other shapes. A numerous and pompous commission was talked of, but it blew over and vanished. These things



things made prudent men suspicious and gave a malignant appearance to our American contest. The consequences and the effects of such a conduct could not but be foreseen : our ministers however never mended their pace. This writer for one at that time did not scruple so far to risque his credit, as freely and publicly to declare in direct terms his opinion that " if the next vernal equinox (then near) did not find us entered into some hopeful and probable treaty of accommodation; we should in all appearance never see again our late provinces under our dominions."\* No spirit of prophecy was required to form or to signify such a conception. The causes appeared clear and the effects could not but follow. His words are hitherto true. No treaty was entered into : such mean counsels are deservedly despised by men who (it is to be hoped) know much better what measures to pursue. Our colonies howe-

\* See a Further Examination of our American measures, page 237, Dec. 1775.

ver accordingly declared themselves independent. God grant that this may be the last instance of any notice or warning of our public mischiefs in like manner given and in like manner neglected, which shall be verified by the event. Thus however did the desire of unconditional submission compleat what the demand of absolute power begun.

A commission nevertheless is at length given to the two noble brethren commanding in chief our navy and our army on the spot, very proper men in all appearance to make war; but whose crowns hitherto consist of the laurel, not of the olive. What is then this commission? A continuation of the same plan; a power to receive submissions and to grant pardons or in words very little different, unconditional submission again, pardon only excepted. Your whole country has with a wonderful unanimity risen and revolted in defence of what they believe to be their all: it is said that your military force  
at



at land amounts to an hundred and fifty thousand men; but if your colonies will submit to be taxed at Westminster, to be bound in all cases whatsoever by a legislature three thousand miles distant from them; to hold their charters at pleasure and to other such consonant conditions; we will not destroy your towns with our artillery nor cut your throats with our armies; your lives shall be spared and only your all shall be taken; at least unless your superiors shall be pleased to run you infinitely more in debt than you are able to pay, after the manner of England. If your hundred and fifty thousand military men will be so good humoured as to lay down their arms, they shall not be hanged drawn and quartered for having taken them up; except however it may be thought proper to make some examples on that subject. This seems to be the power and the substance of the commission. A committee consisting of three persons of the first weight and influence on that continent attended our admiral from the congress. The par-

ties came together on proper ground. He considered them as private persons and they looked upon themselves in their own light. What an admirable opportunity was then for peace and accommodation ! They were at that time in much distress and in danger of more. It is said ; that this plan of immediate and unconditional submission accompanied only with pardon was opened in many words and enforced with a multiplicity of professions sent by our ministers at home : when accordingly every thing thereupon vanished into the air. One of these Americans personally well known in this country and by reputation throughout the civilized world is reported to be just now arrived at Paris ; whither in all appearance he set out immediately after the discharge of his commission to the congress and where it is to be feared ; that he will find offers much more to the minds of himself and his constituents and his errand prove far more effectual, than with our commanders ; as we may one day most probably perceive by the event. The writer guessed but too exactly



actly concerning the absolute rupture of our provinces from us. The sun is now again turned towards our half of the globe: will it be worth the while of certain men to lend an ear, if they shall be told; that he will according to all likelihood never leave more this northern hemisphere, will not arrive at the next summer's solstice: before we are plunged into open and avowed hostilities with France; unless they shall instantly alter the course of their counsels. Thus however have by attempting at absolute power our ministers from a state of the utmost tranquillity first raised the present civil broils in America, then did they by a desire of unconditional submission increase them into independence and now are they by an obstinate perseverance in the same measures upon the brink of almost infallibly adding to the other two this third mischief of a French war.

What is then this revising of acts and instructions? The writer desires, that nothing should to the best of his power re-

main unexplained or unexamined. It is part of the same plan; a new, ministerial manner of expressing the old objects of unconditional submission and absolute power. The first and preliminary step demanded seems to be; that the colonies must submit. To whom? Undoubtedly to the administration, to the authors of all these measures. That being done, the offensive acts of parliament and instructions to governors are to be revised, to be read and reconsidered and such parts are to be altered, as are disliked. Disliked by whom, by the Americans? No, surely you are not so simple as to see things in that light; by the administration, by the same persons, those by whom they were contrived, drawn or passed. *Risum teneatis*.---But suppose, they should dislike none of them, be perfectly well pleased and satisfied with them all: What then? Ask them. Suppose, that they should so heartily approve of them; as to desire more of the same sort, new and stronger: What then? Ask them again: Do you take me for a cabinet counsellor?

I say



I say once more then examine this commission on every side; sift it; weigh it; consider it with your utmost care and attention and what will it after all be found to mean either more or less than the terms of absolute power and unconditional submission with an addition only of pardon? Such is the measure meant to invite again under our dominion thirteen revolted and exasperated colonies, formed into so many independent republics and united for their common defence under one council, armed from one end to the other, possessed of a prodigious and very strong territory and above all backed by France and Spain. Oh this poor country, by what wretched steps is it led on to its destruction!

What however is there then material or essential wanting in this commission? That is indeed a very extensive subject in its full bounds: I will nevertheless endeavour to bring it into a more narrow compass by confining myself to one single example and by considering in that manner a part, as a

pattern of the whole. At the beginning of these disturbances when the tea was destroyed; the charter of Massachusetts Bay (of the colony whose capital is Boston) was for a terror or a punishment reversed or altered. The province has a council for one part of its legislature. The nomination of this body was in particular taken from the house of assembly chosen by the people and placed in the king. The counsellors are now rendered totally dependent on the crown and the governors appointed by it. It need not be said, that this privilege with all its consequences was a very great object to these people: although one would think, that it should be a mighty small matter among the almost infinite prerogatives belonging to the crown of Great Britain. Charters are a right particularly sacred: those of our colonies are of a consequence hardly to be conceived. The security of every charter in America was shaken, when this was overturned. It became a common and most important cause of that whole continent. Men knocked  
on



on the head or shot through the body will without doubt contradict nothing: that is the sure means of people being both made quiet and kept so; but every one must agree, that it is out of question and absolutely impossible to expect, that there should be peace in America with the consent of parties; that any whole colony should contentedly acquiesce or even a single man willingly lay down his arms from (as it were) one end of that great country to the other without the restoration of this charter. That seems to be a sort of *sine quâ non*, an indispensably necessary condition towards such an end. This appears very plain and evident and to want no words for the proving it. I say nevertheless subscribing my name to what I so say; that I fully believe the administration (I mean the leading and the ruling part of it) never to have publicly declared, never to have privately signified so as for it to transpire, never to have in their own minds entertained (for on that I in some measure ground the rest) any such intention, any

meaning or design of restoring this charter, of repealing the act passed on the subject and returning to the people of Massachusetts Bay that their most precious privilege thus wrested from them: I say, not from the moment of the measure being carried into execution to the hour; in which this is now writing. The statute was at first made perpetual and not temporary or to expire of itself at an appointed time; as often is and was in some acts made on the same occasion the case. What has been said may appear a bold word; it may startle and stagger some even friends of the administration, who have not observed or attended to the train of these affairs and whose very souls are not bought and sold: it may perhaps have some general, equivocal or evasive answers; but I am persuaded, that it will not be contradicted on any good ground of authority, that no affirmative proof will be produced in opposition to the negative opinion here advanced. I have purposely not mixed or perplexed this subject with any other: because it so appears clearer, plainer and  
more



more pointed; because it will perfectly explain what manner of spirit our ministers are of; because it will throw light on many other circumstances, being itself the strongest of all; but not because it is single or alone in the conduct of those directing our public concerns. The Quebec act was by our colonists looked upon as a very great grievance, on account both of the extent and the form of government given by it to that province. I could say the same thing, could make (as it were) the like challenge on this subject; but I will not nor will I again go over the so often beaten ground of taxation or of binding in all cases whatsoever. Should the point already thrown out be thought worthy of attention, it will no doubt be examined, cleared up and understood: it leads to further observations of the same sort, which I had rather that others should make for themselves: the way to them is plain and they will by that means be the more convincing. It is the lot of the best and the wisest, but much more of the least and the weakest; that we should  
be

be liable to error. The writer holds, that it becomes no man to offer to the public an hasty belief or any but his most considerate conceptions. He trusts, that he is open to conviction on this or on any other subject; but outward signs may fairly be demanded in proof of the inward intentions of those governing us, as well as of the rest of mankind; without which any one would on such an occasion (as well as on numberless others) be at liberty to say just what he pleased. So far are we then from having ever condescended to due and reasonable terms of peace; that we have in all appearance as yet not so much as persuaded ourselves to pass the first step proper for that purpose, not consented to restore even the charter of Massachusetts Bay reversed (I say) by ourselves at the beginning and on the account of this very dispute.

Will then an accommodation with our colonies of America be a sufficient means to keep us from all our evils? The writer is for one far from saying so. He has long  
believed;



believed ; that the change of our representation from a real to a legal or a nominal one has been our undoing and that nothing, but the restoring our constitution in that respect can be an adequate or a substantial remedy for our mischiefs. Without this all endeavours at reformation, all schemes of oeconomy or plans for paying the public debts, all maxims of preserving ourselves in peace and of meddling no more in the business of others, all resolutions of indulgence towards our provinces or of ease to our own people will be but as sowing good grain in the sands of the sea : however the seed may spring up for a moment or appear to prosper for a time ; the passions of some prince and the flattery common to almost every minister strengthened by the perpetual obsequiousness of our parliaments will infallibly choak and destroy it, before it can come to any maturity or be fit to bear fruit. To talk nevertheless or to write now on that topic in its full extent, what would it be better than beating the air ? Times must exceedingly

ingly mend or (from which may heaven most graciously guard us) become very much worse in England; before such a return or a provision can possibly take place. The conception seems much to resemble, that of the New Jerusalem and may at times serve for the amusement of warm imaginations tinged with enthusiasm on the subject; but in all appearance will perpetually disappoint the hopes of those, who shall seriously expect or pursue it. The writer for one however will not now enter into that adventure: He will endeavour to sail nearer the wind and will point his small political bark towards a port lying (as it were) in the same latitude, but more likely to be attained at least than the other.

A noble lord (whose name stamps authority on his plans; but whose health is said to render it doubtful, how far his country can look for his future services) left us on his departure from public attendance a very valuable legacy; I mean his proposal of doubling the members for our counties in the



the House of Commons. This would add to one branch of our legislature a number of persons at least much interested in the welfare of the whole and surely it might be hoped in some measure independent ; if men of that character any where now remain in this most meanly abject and venal nation. It would deprive no one of the power of voting ; but would double it to multitudes : it would prevent the views or ambition of none ; but might forward the desires and advancement of many : private satisfaction and the public benefit would in this case admirably well fall in with each other ; without which conjunction it is to be feared, that the latter will at this time find it most exceedingly or unsurmountably difficult to make its way. The breath of a minister could not lightly blow away such an establishment ; if the parties electing and elected were once in proper possession of it. At the same time that it was by the generality of the representation a protection to the people ; it would by the promoting men of the first landed fortunes  
among

among us be likewise a security to the crown. I do not deny even the counties themselves to be infected with the general evil of our country ; but all is in our present state become a scramble : It is nothing but the old similitude of a shoulder of mutton. The virtuous Roman famous for having to the utmost of his power withstood the division of the public money came and demanded his own part ; when others had been mean or foolish enough to resolve upon the measure. I would likewise be by no means understood to say ; that this provision will of itself be totally sufficient or effectual. It might have done much ; if it had happily taken place at the revolution, when something of the sort ought undoubtedly to have been introduced and before that the gangrene had got to our very heart. It will however give a greater weight, credit, steadiness, union and connection with the public to one part of our government and may render it one day of most essential service towards restoring the  
state ;



state; when we shall have passed the purgatory in all appearance preparing for us (of whatever nature it may be) if we shall then be so happy, as to preserve our present constitution; our three different legislative parts, our King, our Lords and our Commons and if the power of corruption shall under such circumstances be by want of the means weakened and abated among us. It is upon the whole perhaps the best understood proposition for the public good, which has been made in our times; of all that have had the least likelihood of being carried into execution. What a pity will it be; if so excellent an object shall be suffered to fall to the ground? Let us on the contrary hope; that some person animated with the same public spirit (as his lordship) and united to him in the like political sentiments may adopt the idea and one day place it among our statutes; if the good fortune of our country shall ever afford him an opportunity of performing for it so valuable a piece of service.

Why

Why however do I in this case make my application to any other, than to our ministers themselves? All men on occasion no doubt find in their own minds the means of flattering or of excusing themselves from the necessity of things or from some other cause: Our present governors however cannot within their own breasts, but be sensible; that they have in fact brought many and great mischiefs on their country. Even such a regulation, this very moderate return may cover or atone for a multitude of errors. It will not lose our ministers a single majority. The acceptableness of the measure will for their time far overbalance any additional independence. The post of Mayor in our palace is not yet become hereditary: surely it behoves even our rulers themselves to have some regard for their posterity after them. It is to be doubted; how far the writer may have the honour of being reckoned in their train: he is however confident, that he offers them no evil counsel either for their country or for themselves in recommending; that they should  
without



in present secure the state of the public by an immediate peace with America and then should pass the provision here spoken of, as laying the firststone in the foundation of its further, future safety and welfare.

I would here willingly speak my humble opinion concerning the two propositions said to have at the same time been thrown out by the noble lord respecting the house of peers and intended for the like great and good purpose there\*; but *fugit interea*—the writer might ramble too far from his purpose. So much however he begs leave to say; that as on one hand that noble body are beyond doubt no other than guardians and trustees for the public, so is he sensible on the other; that they stand in the constitution on totally a different ground from the direct representatives of the people. Our ancestors were of opi-

\* Taking away the translation of Bishops and electing the sixteen peers of North Britain for life.

nion, that an hereditary nobility in the state composing one part of our legislature would be for the general benefit of the whole. On this principle our House and succession of peers are established, a principle the wisdom or the propriety of which this writer is very far from disputing: he sincerely honours and respects it in his real sentiments: if our country is at this time in danger of being borne down by an abundant weight of evils; they have come from another quarter. Venice and Genoa, directly aristocratical states, are two of the most flourishing parts of Europe within the pale of Popery. Holland and Switzerland rank highly in that respect among Protestants and much partake of the same species of government. Be these things however as they may; the case and our claim are exceedingly different with regard to that other and honourable house; whose absolute essence is to represent in miniature the whole commons of Great Britain at large and which (I am sure that) I do by such a description not mean to disgrace or  
to



to degrade. The members of it are immediately nominated and appointed by the people for that particular purpose, the especial protectors of our liberties and attorneys of our interests. I say then ; that should time alter and mar these things, as it must all human institutions : it will nevertheless remain our native, our inherent and unalterable right to demand by dutiful and constitutional ; but withal by free, by most earnest and for their weight and number almost irresistible petitions ; that they should be renewed and restored to us again nor can all the J-hnf-ns, the T-ck-rs, the W-fl-ys, the M-cph-rf-ns and a thousand more such say one syllable of sense to the contrary ; if they will not evade or elude, but fairly look the question in the face. The contamination of this source has been the cause not only of all our evils in general likely to overwhelm us, but perhaps of this American quarrel in particular. Let us then (I repeat) apply to our mischiefs of each sort the right and respective remedy, immediate peace to the one, but fit provisions in the

proper places to the other and may heaven and the public bless those persons ; who shall execute these counsels or such as these or who shall propose other better, of whatever party and denomination among us they may be.

I throw out such words the rather ; because to pass by others there is in particular one gentleman, who has distinguished himself in the late American questions and who (when his proofs appear of themselves not over convincing) so continually rants and raves about mock patriots and republican bigots ; that it seems, as if these spectres sometimes haunted him in his sleep\*. I don't well understand, what any one means by objecting to good measures under the pretence of their being in the world bad men. There is a set of people, who perpetually abuse every thing in the shape of patriotism ; not at the bottom because persons of that description do but too often

\* See Address and Appeal and Series of Answers.

betray



betray their own principles, when they are in power; but because they maintain the liberty of the public, when they are out of it. Let us then not trouble ourselves about parties; but directly seek the common good of the whole. Let us establish such a system; as may at once both restrain evil ministers and disappoint false patriots. Let us resolve on provisions; which will naturally induce or necessarily force every man to be true and faithful to the trust undertaken by him for the community. Let us set our faces again corruption, that accursed canker; which infects and consumes our land from one end to the other. These things surely may to a degree at least be done, not however by ultimately bringing all to the single will of one perhaps ignorant, obstinate or otherwise unqualified person; but by giving to the public some part in the care of its own affairs; whose business they properly are, which is most concerned to see them duly conducted and that can have no interest against itself. This I say in general; but on the present

occasion in particular, ought we not in prudence (as every reasonable man does, whose house is in flames) to concur and co-operate with those; who desire and endeavour to quench the fire; to quench it (I mean) in this case not with blood, but to put an end to it by peace and reconciliation?

I do for one not pretend to pin my faith on the sleeves of politicians: so far however as the public may be concerned in the question, let us presume to ask: who they are, whom we may judge this gentleman to compliment with his courteous appellation of mock patriots; but that the writer must rather hope and believe to have at present the common cause of our country in their hands. Have they not possessed the first posts and offices of the state? Could they undoubtedly not have held them on the same terms, as others have since done? Have they not evidently relinquished them in conformity to their opinion of the public good; because they would not give their  
consent



consent and concurrence to measures in which their hearts and their sentiments must not have gone along with their actions and their language? I know; how fond some people are to find any quirk or quibble on this subject: even party or self interest itself however cannot answer these points, but in favour of those towards whom I am now taking the liberty to turn my discourse. I will likewise not inquire into any other merits or recommendations of their successors; but sure I am, that they are not remarkable for being lucky in their politics. Our American war is the rock on which we are running with all our sails set; where the public ship is in instant danger of dashing and of breaking into a thousand pieces; where we risque being wrecked (as it were) before we sleep. Is then the nation so forlorn that men could not without difficulty be found; who would willingly and readily relieve us in that respect? So should we however obtain time and with it hope, which in the affairs of men futurity is said ever to afford.

But how could peace proceed from the side here spoken of? is not the celebrated declaratory act said to have originally come from some of that quarter? It may be so: it was no doubt at first however intended only for a dead letter, to satisfy some at home and not to offend others abroad. It accordingly produced its effect with our colonies, the parties chiefly concerned; who never more troubled themselves upon the subject, until some people drew this sword out of the scabbard and have in their madness so dealt it about, that it has already deluged with blood America and is likely to do more. These men beyond question meant at the bottom to tax that country, to try the experiment and to push it to the extremity; which they are now about. If they had not found the declaratory act and the duty on tea ready to their hands; it cannot be doubted, but they would have passed what they had pleased for the purpose. I do not mean that this act ought not to be revoked: surely it should having by whose-soever means made so much mischief. The  
 writer



writer has said these things only for the sake of truth and that in this most difficult crisis of our country all men wishing well to it may be united. He has no personal concern in the subject. He is neither of Paul nor of Apollos nor of Cephas; but (if it may be permitted him to parody those holy words) he only preaches the good and the safety of the public; which he must believe exceedingly to depend upon a speedy peace with America,

Having said so much about mock-patriots I would not neglect to add some words concerning republican-bigots; whom I suppose to be different persons from the others and not to be looked for among Chancellors, Treasurers and Secretaries. I guess these to mean some of the first writers of our times in philosophy, morality and politics. The writer will not presume to make any comparison between them and the gentleman, from whom the reflection falls; but he is for one ready to acknowledge himself hardly worthy to kiss the hem  
of

of their garments. They have their pens and ink in their hands : he will leave them to their own defence. He has himself however been always accustomed to converse freely ; but he cannot recollect ever to have heard even one single person express a desire, that any steps should be taken towards setting up in England (what is called) a republic or to have signified, that he believed such a scheme to be in our time practicable or possible. If any thing of this kind has in his presence happened ; it has been so slight as to slip out of his remembrance. He moves in an humbler sphere, than to be honoured with any of these high titles : he attributes none of them to himself nor does he seem to come within the gentleman's description ; having declared himself rather for a separation from America, than a continuation of the present most ruinous war : whereas the gentleman makes it a great point (and as it were) a characteristic of his republican bigot ; that he is by all means for keeping Great Britain and that country together. The  
prayer



prayer of the writer has ever been (according to what we are well taught) for peace in our times : this coincides with his conception of the public good ; it suits his situation, his temper and his time of day ; but if the madness of any set of men should nevertheless fling all things into confusion ; if we are to have nothing, but what chance and the fortuitous concourse of atoms shall produce out of their chaos ; his choice is not now to make between an elective and an absolute government. It is no doubt free for him to aver ; that he should on such an occasion place in his wishes and his opinion a real representation of the people only, before an hereditary Aristocracy and the latter very far before a simple monarchy. It is not many centuries, that there have been in England two legislative houses. There was a time when our Lords and Commons sat together and were blended in one body. The writer presumes, that it is perfectly lawful to say ; that he should infinitely prefer such a constitution, a government consisting of hereditary peers and  
elected

electd commoners united, voting and acting together in the same chamber and composing the same senate even without a prince, I say should very far prefer it to the being ruled by the will of one person, whether signified by his sign manual or through the formal intervention of a few bought and corrupted men. It is however to be hoped, that we shall be put to no such experience ; but that certain persons will content themselves with having given birth to thirteen Commonwealths in America and not assimilate Great Britain to them ; if they cannot bring them back to Great Britain. The writer will here venture so far out of his way, as to say ; he cannot but wonder, that some of the American colonies should appoint or propose intricate and perplexed forms of government \* instead of one plain, simple representative of the people equally chosen and comprehending both the legislative and the executive power and

\* See in particular the plan of government proposed for Pennsylvania.

which



which might of course on occasion act by committees or parts of itself. As there can be no simpler, so in all appearance neither can there be any better democratical form of government, than that; if there can at all be any such for a large or dispersed people, who are under the necessity of framing for themselves an entirely new constitution. Some people seem by republicanism only to mean a regard to the public and a love of our country; but he must be among the meanest of men, who shall in that sense scruple to bear so honourable an appellation during his life or to have it inscribed on his tomb after his decease. It must surely be the good of the public; which is the guide at least in all political measures and morality.

Here then I take my leave of these republican bigots; but to shew how much this gentleman sometimes shoots his bolts at random I must mention; that in his book before he mightily talks about penitons of France and repeats the same in his last.

last. He says, that these pensioners of France will\* declaim bitterly against our parting with North America; for that is the ground, on which he introduces all these different characters into his drama. Now what a most strange extravagance this is? Let any one ask himself the question; whether of the two France would rather buy, an union or a separation between Great Britain and her colonies and which she would command her dependents or her emissaries to promote? Sure I am; that I shall not spend my breath on such a subject nor is that the particular observation I meant to make; but I desire it to be considered, on whom have in our time fallen the suspicion and the charge of touching French money and of selling our country and of betraying our counsels to the court of France. I say no more on that matter: but had I the honour to be of this gentleman's cabinet, I should, as a critic, coun-

\* See Series of Answers page 85, and Address and Appeal, page 11.



fel him another time to keep from that topic.

This gentleman has made a round declaration of his own independance for the time to come. I do for one credit him upon it; but since the political propositions advanced by him are to be understood, as his sincere and genuine sentiments; I must need say, that some of them are both in themselves most strange and in their experiment most dangerous to the Public. Whoever directly or indirectly and in any shape spurred or encouraged our ministers to the present measures against America, has already very great and will in all appearance have many more and extreme mischiefs to answer for; before the whole catastrophe shall be closed: he will bid fair to find reason for a severe repentance, if at times he ever impartially examines his own breast and has the least feeling of the evils either of mankind, his country or perhaps even of himself. I will say to this gentleman only one thing more. He greatly  
com-

complains of the treatment given him by his antagonists ; but his own dictionary does exceedingly abound in hard words, which well know their way into his writings. I will not repeat, what has formerly been observed \* : he may perhaps be mending on that head. Whereas in his publication before the last within the compass of four short lines he flings on some persons differing from him several of the foulest terms in our language ; in this latter he only tells them with a little circumlocution, that the best of them pay no regard to truth or decency†. He can construe *Qui dicit, quod vult ; quod non vult, audiet*. Every man has a right to receive in return some of the same kind of compliments, as he is himself pleased to bestow upon others. If the writer shall seem to have remained long on any of these subjects ; his excuse must be besides their importance

\* See Further Examination page 175.

† See Series of Answers, page 98.



or propriety on the occasion, that the book of this gentleman having lately been in his hands, some of it could not well fail sticking to his fingers.

I have now considered the probability of a French and a Spanish war and have endeavoured to point out the proper means of avoiding them: I have examined the measures and the American commission of our ministers and believe myself to have, but too plainly proved; that these are immediately running upon the very rock before mentioned: I have likewise presumed to follow at a distance the footsteps of a great statesman and have repeated a plan for the restoring in some small measure our most excellent, but now almost lost constitution; I beg nevertheless liberty to say something upon one or two more points, before I turn my back upon my subject. The conduct of France being in discourse and her hand appearing beyond a possibility of doubt or contradiction every day more plain, I desire in the first place to discuss a particular charge of-

ten much urged against the Americans; which has a connection with that circumstance. It is used to be said; that they continued dutiful and obedient, while they were apprehensive of their French neighbours; but that we having conquered for them Canada and Louisiana and thereby removed that fear, they then thought; that they might rise and rebel and set up their before projected republics at their pleasure. This is the conception; which has been pressed upon them, as a home thrust and an accusation, of which they cannot get clear. You know, what were my sentiments concerning the American cause; that being in the beginning grounded in justice it has its head in heaven and its root in the foundations of the world nor can by every trifling suggestion therefore be shaken or overthrown. The writer is however earnestly desirous to remove every the smallest obstacle towards peace or the slightest pretence for ill blood: he is perfectly persuaded, that the Americans may put their whole dispute on this point itself and take  
upon



upon them to prove; that the very circumstance here alledged must instead of assisting operate against and to the disadvantage of their revolt. I say then; that France is their present support; they are there received, protected, supplied and encouraged: she is (as it were) their sheet anchor in this their distressed condition: these words have but too much meaning. If Canada were now French, would not then the case be there likewise the same or would New France refuse to follow the example of the old? Would not the Provincials have behind them fast friends; where they might on occasion find refuge, shelter, resources and assistance? How would you have prevented them from being plentifully supplied with gunpowder, cannon, mortars, muskets, clothing and every other necessary or convenience (some of which are now perhaps sufficiently wanted by them) when the French freely carried thither all such things and then without difficulty disposed of, sold or gave them to these their neighbours of that continent? would you have forbidden France to furnish with those ar-

ticles her own forts and garrisons ; have restrained her trade with her own settlements or have searched her men of war and her merchant ships in their passage to Quebec ? How easily would their engineers or other officers and perhaps those of some more nations besides have found their way from Canada to our colonies ? what is now the case in that country ? Is there not a most dangerous enemy coming on the backs of the Americans ; while our fleet and our other army are attacking them in their front ? There is however no end of these questions ; but would it be as readily and as roundly answered or could there be found no grounds for such a suspicion in the Quebec act itself ; if any one should advance, that the possession of the French provinces had on the contrary encouraged certain other persons in their projects against ours. I leave nevertheless that subject to itself. Let us next turn our eyes towards the Spaniards. Would not they be acting the same part at Augustine and in Florida, as they are at the Havanna and in Old Spain ; if that place



place and that country now continued with them? France and Spain are one. More words will not make this matter clearer: what a most strange argument is the contrary? It was nevertheless one of the best among those of some people and how long and how easily did it pass? Time and the fact now plainly disprove it. The case is perhaps much the same with respect to some other points; if they were at present to my purpose. Political disputants are not apt to acknowledge their groundless charges; but this certainly can never more be maintained, unless modesty is banished from among men; as has long been said concerning justice. It was evidently then not the removal of the French and the Spaniards from that country, which induced our Americans to their present proceedings; but it is to be wished, that some men would look a little into their own conduct and consider; whether it is difficult to find there another much surer source and cause of these unfortunate events.

It is often affirmed experience to have already proved the little value, of which our North American provinces ever were to us; for where is the want of money, the decay of commerce, the distresses and the difficulties with which we have been threatened on their defection? I answer in the first place then; that the war itself creates a great trade and probably a very beneficial one too; if contractors would tell their secrets, which however will hardly happen, until those of all hearts shall be explained and opened. I have now in my hands an account of the extraordinaries of the army extracted from the papers laid before the house of commons. There are in it above twenty one thousand pounds for cabbage, for four crout, salted cabbage sent to Boston: there are to a Privy-counsellor and his partner (besides other articles to the first) above four hundred thousand pounds for the service of the forces in North America. You will not expect of me to be exceedingly particular: our public accounts are drawn in the true stile of writing: they contain  
much



much matter in a very small compass and very little language: they are short and sweet, *multum in parvo*, like the Iliad in a nut-shell. What number of words is it imagined; that there go to a bargain of that magnitude between a first minister and his friend, whom he has a mind to serve? Whether so many, as between two jockeys about the sale of a horse in Smithfield? Why may not an hundred thousand pounds be gotten upon a single agreement of this kind or more money and what check is there in the case, except the inclination of the minister on one hand and the moderation of the contractor himself on the other? Suppose the same person was to vote the war in Council, in Parliament and in other material places besides, I am most happy with respect to the example before my eyes; that it refers to one, upon whom the least possible suspicion cannot fall of any unfit influence from such a motive. I write the more freely for that reason; but it need not be said, that this cannot always be the case: the argument is general. Be

these things however as they may : millions borrowed and expended in this manner operate for the present much, as if they were brought in by the balance of trade. They are dispersed and make a plenitude in the public alike. The contractor himself may be too cautious or too prudent to spend his profits ; but he places them with other people and they become part in the common stock of currency, before the chain is at an end. The less the public receives in return or in plain English the bigger the job ; the more the immediate ease : the price is in that case paid and distributed, but the correspondent commodities nevertheless remain for any other market or purpose. A private prodigal never wallows in more affluence ; than while he is from all quarters taking up money on bonds, annuities and mortgages. The case is the same with a public body from a kingdom to a commission of turnpike. If borrowing could but continue for ever ; he only would be a bad œconomist, who was so imprudent as to live within the income of his



his fortunes. When that practice stops or the time of payment comes ; it is then that the party ; whether a government, a country gentleman or a shop keeper on Ludgate hill appears to be broken or bankrupt. What can be more absurd than to talk about the want of money in a nation, whose minister is at that instant putting his hands into the pockets of the whole world, freely drawing it from thence and lavishly dealing it out first to his own creatures and dependants and then through them to all the rest of the country ? There is in this case likewise another consideration. Should any where our manufactures fail or our common people find it difficult to subsist ; the navy and the army are ready not only with prodigious premiums to receive, but almost with violence to seize upon all who come in their way. They may in America then be fed by the public or live by plunder or lye in the bed of honour. Some of these three things necessarily must and all in their turn not improbably may happen to them ; but any  
one

one of them will be sufficient to prevent their demands and their complaints at home. Who can say, that a man having his brains beat out beyond the Atlantic dyed or was starved for want of bread in Great Britain? The most likely to be mutinous or clamorous being happily thus disposed of: the rest may the better pine in silence and in submission. There are other plain appearances: I will not enter into them: our eyes are strongly closed; although it is to be hoped not unto death. Thus does however the war by a certain round (as it were) keep up the ball and supply in some sense its own wants. Borrowing and funding make a fullness of money throughout the nation, enlisting and pressing cover the distress of individuals; but it is impossible not to observe, that they all unite to insure our undoing.

I am coming towards my conclusion: I shall detain but little longer you or the public: I would before the taking my last leave however willingly say a few words to our mil-



military men. They are sometimes supposed ticklish people to talk to; but I shall on one hand endeavour to avoid offence and they will on the other certainly allow me liberty of speech. The writer does not readily comprehend, how a commission should cancel or reduce within the single obligation of obedience to some particular person all the duties of morality or that the colour of any one's coat may exempt him from the rules common to the rest of mankind. What can sanctify ingratitude, injustice, rapine, murder or devastation? There is an essential and an unalterable difference between pleasure and pain, happiness and misery: no one is so deprived of understanding as not to perceive or so void of modesty as to deny it. This necessarily stamps the respective character of right and wrong upon human actions; accordingly as they contribute to the one or the other of these two objects. The will of a Prince and the orders of a General cannot over-bear or over-rule nor the beating of drums and the sounding of trumpets

pets drown or destroy these things. If an officer and his corps offend without cause any person in Britain; they are amenable before twelve men and to the laws of the land. Can then Good and Evil ever be left behind in our island or be sunk upon their passage in the great Atlantic ocean? Are they only the invention of national lawgivers or do they first subsist in the nature of things themselves and these only prescribe the modes of proceeding, the rewards and the punishments respecting them? Am I then (cries the soldier) obliged to consult Suarez, Grotius or Sanderson, before I draw my sword or fire my musket? I answer that no such idea is entertained. It must be vain to discourse with any one, who is in a downright state of force or of servitude; but I will tell a soldier or any man at all master of himself what he is obliged not only to consult, but to obey and to pursue besides: I mean, his own sincere, inward sentiments and opinion. Such is the constant condition of humanity and who are they; that pretend to



to plead a privilege in this respect above all others of their species? No one from the bishop sitting upon a legislative bench to the meanest officer in a marching regiment is entitled or warranted to put his sense and consciousness of things into the pocket of a minister and to act himself without any. They could sometimes perhaps not easily be in a worse place. Do you mean then to impeach the profession of Arms? On the contrary I highly honour it: the writer respects it, as the protection of the innocent, the support of the helpless and the defence of our country. Let those answer that question; who would debase it to far different purposes: It may behove some other people to beware; lest by resolving to palliate every particular action, they throw difficulties upon the profession itself in general. Here however says some one animated with an ardour for the service and the field: Give me then victory, glory and advancement and do you preach your sermons to monks and to hermits. I presume this to be the true point

point and issue of the subject. The writer will in return therefore be likewise bold to reply, although without any particular application ; that there is a course of things, which a leader at the head of forty or fifty thousand men cannot command, but which sooner or later and by some means or other seldom fails to humble the most proud and the most powerful or to make the strongest and the stoutest to feel, who despise or oppose it. My moral I do not mean to explain ; but the principle obtains throughout all the parts of our globe.

Here then my journey is ended. If the writer shall in any place appear to have expressed himself with a greater degree of freedom than may be welcome to some men, it deserves to be considered ; how just a displeasure or provocation it is for any one perfectly satisfied in his humble situation to see every thing about him, his country and his private affairs in danger of being totally



tally confounded and distracted by the means and the measures of those very persons, whose particular province and duty it is to preserve the public from all mischiefs. Our present condition very widely differs from that of our ancestors at the period of the Revolution. We had then no national debt, hardly one of a single shilling. Our country abounded with men and money. Government was in its vigour. An inconsiderate measure in politics might be pursued almost with impunity. These things are now totally altered. We are by a gradual progress at length come to the brink of a precipice. We must stay our steps or we go headlong. Our fate much depends upon a few months or days. Let us then not become parties in the dispute between Spain and Portugal. Let us keep a watchful eye over France for the purpose not of entering into contention, but of preserving peace. Let us above all accommodate ourselves with our colonies. Let us establish such provisions, as may at the same time both check corruption and disappoint ambition.

Let

Let us employ our armies for the defence  
and not the destruction of ourselves. Let  
us without distinction unite for the saving  
of our country; which does in this most  
difficult crisis, but too much want the con-  
currence and the assistance of every honest  
man.

December, 1776.

F I N I S.

